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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 000035

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL SP BO

SUBJECT: SPAIN: DEPUTY FM ON "MODERATE" EVO MORALES VISIT

REF: MADRID 32

Classified By: DCM Bob Manzanares for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Deputy Foreign Minister Bernardino Leon called Charge on January 5 to pass on his impressions of Bolivian President-elect Evo Morales' meeting with Foreign Minister Moratinos. Leon assessed that the meeting was a good introduction but not very substantive. He noted that Morales was quite moderate in all his meetings in Spain (reftel). He said that Moratinos impressed on Morales that the US, Spain, and the EU could be helpful to Bolivia and that it was important that Morales not alienate any of the parties because it would hurt Bolivia in the long run economically and politically. Leon reported that Moratinos also emphasized the need for Morales to govern democratically. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Deputy FM Leon spoke with Charge about the January 4 meeting in Madrid between FM Moratinos and President-elect Morales. Leon said that Moratinos had advised Morales to work with, rather than antagonize, the US. He said that Moratinos pointed out to Morales that the US, Spain, and the EU could be helpful to Bolivia and that it was important that Morales not alienate any of the parties because it would hurt Bolivia in the long run economically and politically. According to Leon, Moratinos impressed on Morales that, as the undisputed winner of a very democratic election, he now needs to govern democratically. Leon said that Morales made all the right noises and said he would listen to the advice of all. Morales also acknowledged that he was new to the business of running a country and would accept advice from GOS.

¶3. (C) Leon reported that Moratinos told Morales to tone down his rhetoric with regards to the US. Morales responded by saying that he had said much in the heat of the campaign but understood it would need to be different now that he had come to power. Morales mentioned his recent meeting with US Ambassador to Bolivia Greenlee and said he had been left with a positive impression and the hope that Bolivia and the US could work to some common understanding.

¶4. (C) With regards to Spanish business concerns, Morales told Moratinos that the idea was not to expropriate properties or assets from the Spanish or other foreign companies but that the rules of how Bolivian natural assets would be managed would change to favor Bolivians rather than the companies.

¶5. (C) According to Leon, Morales was very moderate in all his meetings with GOS officials as well as in meetings with Spanish business leaders. But, Leon said, we have to wait and see how he governs once he assumes the Presidency.

AGUIRRE